

AmCham Sri Lanka Founder Showcase empowers the next generation of female entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka

Colombo, 3rd April 2021

AmCham Sri Lanka on 30th March 2021, launched in Colombo its inaugural edition of the AmCham SL Founder Showcase. The AmCham SL Founder Showcase 2022 is conducted in collaboration with the Good Market Sri Lanka and is aimed at empowering the next generation of female entrepreneurs to launch and/or grow their people & planet friendly businesses through seed funding, B2B connect and investment opportunities. AmCham Sri Lanka intends to conduct this program on an ongoing basis, with Founder Showcases taking place in March and August each year.

In order to conduct this special project, applications were called from young female entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 – 35, and through a stringent criteria of evaluation, 05 finalists were selected to make their product and business presentations to a panel of judges comprised of H. E. Rita Manella (Italian Ambassador to Sri Lanka), Lakshan Madurasinghe (Regional Lead Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability - Coca Cola Sri Lanka, The Maldives, Nepal & Bhutan & President- AmCham Sri Lanka), Aruni Gunathilaka (Chairperson - Hatton National Bank), Achala Samaradivakara (Founder and Managing Director - The good Market) and Dr. Sulochana Segera (Chairperson- Woman in Management) in a ‘Shark Tank’ like event, which each finalist being afforded 8 minutes to make their pitch. Finalists were thereafter invited to share/serve their products to the judges and the audience and were provided a further 5 minutes of Q&A time, as well as subsequent B2B and investor introduction opportunities.

The inaugural AmCham Sri Lanka Founder Showcase 2022 was supported by Grant Partner – Fairfirst Insurance and event partners MOSH, Munchee Kome, Kerry Logistics, IAS Holdings, Nations Trust Bank, Nrich Care and Robbialac.

The finalists of the AmCham SL Founder Showcase 2022 were - Audharya (PVT) LTD by Chathurya Sooriyabandara, NIM K Food Pvt. Ltd. by Nimisha Karasnalaga, Wild Collection by Santhushi Wijekoon, Nue Body Basics by Shabnam Farook, and Gami Gedara UR Zest by Sanduni Wijesinghe and 24-year-old Chathurya Sooriyabandara the founder of Audharya (Pvt.) Ltd. emerged winner of the Grant of Rs. 250,000, and the remaining finalists received token grants of Rs. 25,000 each for their participation and effort.

Speaking at the event, Chairperson of the AmCham SL Founder Showcase 2022, entrepreneur and visionary businesswoman Tania Polonnowita-Wettimuny stated that today, women of all ages are breaking biases and the orthodox mindset of society by challenging the status quo in a variety of industries and professions and leading in international missions and multinational organizations. She noted, “there are many of us who come from simple beginnings and backgrounds, who have broken the bias and challenged the odds to conquer our goals with grace and dignity, to make an impact in local and global communities, that is why, being an entrepreneur myself, I fully understand how important forums such as these

are to provide support for the next generation of female leaders, and The Board of AMCHAM feels immense happiness to be a part of someone's dream by encouraging women to showcase their entrepreneurial skills"

~ ends.

About AMCHAM Sri Lanka:

The American Chamber of Commerce in Sri Lanka (AmCham SL), is one of the most influential and prestigious business chambers in the island, recognized as the leading forum for the facilitation and development of trade, investment and business relations between Sri Lanka and the United States. AmCham SL is an Association whose stakeholders are its near 400 members, made up of top blue-chip organizations in the island and provides its members a multi-dimensional resource network that delivers information, tools and knowledge they need to succeed in bilateral business relations between the two Nations through information share, LQAs, Seminars, Workshops, B2G and B2B networking and exclusive connect & advisory services.